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## AN OVERLAND JOURNEY.

XVII.

### Laramie to South Pass.

SOUTH PASS, Rocky Mountains, }  
July 3, 1859.

I exhausted all the possibilities of obtaining a lodging in Laramie before applying to the commander of the post, but no one else could (or would) afford me a shelter on any terms, so I made a virtue of necessity and applied to Capt. Clark, who at once assigned me a room—there being few troops at this post at present—and for the five days I remained there I slept between a floor and a roof, after five weeks' experience of the more primitive methods of keeping cold at bay. I was treated with more than hospitality—with generous kindness—by Capt. Clark, Lehots, Hascoll and Follett, and Dr. Johns—and yet the long tarry became at length irksome, because I had already lost too much time, and was most anxious to be moving westward. Finally, the mail stage from the East bore in sight on the morning of the 30th but halted just across Laramie River all day, repairing coach, and it was 8 p. m. when it started—I alone perched on the summit of its seventeen mail bags as passenger—he who had occupied that coveted post thus far kindly giving way for me, and agreeing to take the slower wagon that was to follow next morning. We forded the swollen Laramie two miles above the Fort, in the last vestige of twilight—had the usual trouble with the mules turning about in mid-stream, tangling up the team and threatening to upset the wagon—but overcame it after a while, got safely out, drove on fifteen miles to Warm Spring—a fountain which throws out half water enough for a grist mill, all of which is drunk up by the thirsty sands through which it takes its course before it would reach the Platte, only three or four miles distant. We camped here till daylight, then lost two hours in hunting up our mules, which had been simply tied in pairs and allowed to go at large in quest of the scanty grass of this region. They were found at last, and we went on our way rejoicing.

I shall not weary my readers with a journal of our travels for the last four days. Hitherto since I left civilized Kansas, I traversed routes either newly opened or scarcely known to our readers; but from Laramie I have followed the regular California and Oregon Overland Trail, already many times described, and by this time familiar to hundreds of thousands. Suffice it that, for over two hundred miles from Laramie, it traverses a region substantially described in my notes of my journey from the Buffalo range to Denver and from Denver to Laramie, a region for the most part, rainless in Summer and Autumn, yet one whose soil of more or less sandy clay, lacking support from ridges of underlying rock, has been more scamed, and gouged, and gullied, and washed away, by the action of floods and streams than any other on earth—a region of bluffs, and buttes, and deep ravines, and intervals, and shallow alkaline lakelets, now mainly dried up and streams running milky, even when low, with the clay gullied from their banks and sent off to render the Missouri a river of mud, and to fertilize the bottoms of the lower Mississippi. Occasionally, but not so frequently as south of Laramie, the clay hills hardened into rock by some alchemy of Nature, present the perpendicular fronts and ruinous castle aspects already described—in a few instances, the scanty creeks which make their way from the mountains to the North Platte or the Sweetwater run through canons of such rock; but usually each creek has washed ed off for itself a wide valley, and the bluffs or buttes, where they exist are distant many miles on one side if not on both. In a few places, the mountains are so near that their thin, scattered, stunted, scraggy Yellow Pines are plainly visible—are even close beside us; but usually the prospect is composed of rolling prairie very recently grassed and often thickly covered for miles by the everlasting Sagebrush of this desolate region. This is not an anomaly as might be supposed—the stem lives for years perhaps centuries, though the shoots and leaves die every Autumn. Another shrub, less common, but which often thickly covers hundreds of acres, is the Greasewood—a low prickly bush, growing in bunches like the Sage bush, and looking like a bad imitation of the English Privet.—Besides the two miserable shrubs, the dry

land other than the mountains, for hundreds of miles, produces a very little burnt up grass in patches, and a good many ill-favored weeds of no known or presumed value. Of wood, the Platte and its tributaries have at intervals a shred of the eternal Cottonwood of the Plains, much of it the more scrubby and worthless species known as Bitter Cottonwood, with a very little of the equally worthless Box Elder—and that is all.—But, 140 miles this side of Laramie, we leave the Platte, which here comes from the south, and strikes nearly forty miles across a barren divide to its tributary, the Sweetwater, which we find just by Independence Rock, quite a landmark in this desolate region, with several low mountains of almost baked rock around it, having barely soil enough in their crevices to support a few dwarfish Pines.—Five miles above this is the Devil's Gate—a passage of the Sweetwater through a perpendicular cañon 25 feet wide and said to be 600 feet high—a passage which must have been cut while the rock was still clay. Here a large party of Mormons were caught by the snows of Winter while on their way to Salt Lake some years since, and forced to encamp for the Winter, so scantily provided that more than a hundred of them died of hunger and hardship before Spring. Many more must have fallen victims had not a supply train from Salt Lake reached them early in the Spring. And here is a fountain of cold water—the first that I had seen for more than a hundred miles, though there is another on the long stretch from the Platte to the Sweetwater which is said to be good, but a drove of cattle were making quite too free with it when we passed. Here the weary crowd of emigrants to California were to gather yesterday for a celebration of the "Glorious" Fourth, and I was warmly invited to stop and participate, and now I heartily wish I had, since I find that all our haste was in vain.

It was midnight of the 3d when we reached the mailroute station known as the Three Crossing, from the fact that so many fordings of the Sweetwater (here considerably larger than at its mouth, 40 miles or more below) have to be made within the next mile. We had been delayed two hours by the breaking away of our two lead mules, in crossing a deeply rutted path—or rather by the fruitless efforts of our conductor to recover them. I had been made sick by the bad water I had drunk from the brooks we crossed during the hot day, and rose in a not very patriotic, certainly not a joyful mood, unable to eat, but ready to move on. So we started a little after sunrise, and, at the very first crossing, one of our lead mules turned about and ran into his mate, whom he threw down and tangled so that he could not get up, and in a minute another mule was down and the two in imminent danger of drowning. They were soon liberated from the harness and got up, and we went out; but just then an emigrant on the bank espied a carpet bag in the water—mine, of course—and fished it out. An examination was then had, and showed that my trunk was missing—the boot of the stage having been opened the night before our arrival at the Station and culpably left unfastened. We made a hasty search for the stray, but without success, and after an hour's delay, our conductor drove off, leaving my trunk still in the bottom of the Sweetwater, which is said to be ten feet deep just below our ford. I would rather have sunk a thousand dollars there. Efforts were directed to be made to fish it out; but my hope of ever seeing it again is a faint one. We forded the Sweetwater six times yesterday after that without a single mishap; but I have hardly yet become reconciled to the loss of my trunk, and, on the whole my Fourth of July was not a happy one.

Our road left a southerly bend of Sweetwater after dinner and took its way over the hills, so as not to strike it again till after dark, at a point three miles from where I now write. We were now nearly at the summit of the route, with snowy mountains near us in several directions, and one large snow-bank by the side of a creek we crossed ten miles back. Yet our yesterday's road was no rougher, while it was decidedly better, than that of any former day this side of Laramie, as may be judged from the fact that, with a late start, we made sixty miles with one (six mules) team to our heavy-laden wagon. The grass is better for the last twenty miles than on any twenty miles previously; and the swift streams that frequently cross our way are cold and sweet. But, unlike the Platte, the Sweetwater has scarcely a tree or bush growing on its banks; but up the little stream on which I am writing, on a box in the Mail Company's station tent, there is glorious water, some grass, and more wood than I have seen so close together since I emerged from the Gold Diggings on Vasquez's Fork, five hundred miles away.—A snow-bank, forty rods long and several feet deep, lies just across the brook; the wind blows cold at night, and we had a dust-rain squall—just enough to lay the dust—yesterday afternoon. The Mail Agent whom we met here had orders not to run into Salt Lake ahead of time; so he keeps us over here to-day, and will then take six days to reach Salt Lake, which we might reach in four. I am but a passenger, and must study patience. —A word on Salt Lake Mail. Of the seventeen bags on which I have ridden

for the last four days and better, at least sixteen are filled with large bound books, mainly Patent Office Reports, I judge—but all of them undoubtedly works ordered printed at public cost—your cost, reader!—by Congress, and now on their way to certain favored Mormons, franked (by proxy) "Pub. Doc. Free. J. M. Bernhisel, M. C." I do not blame Mr. B. for clutching his share of this public plunder, and distributing it so as to increase his own popularity and importance; but I do protest against this business of printing books by wholesale at the cost of the whole People for free distribution to a party only. It is every way wrong and pernicious. Of the \$190,000 per annum paid for carrying the Salt Lake Mail, nine-tenths is absorbed in the cost of carrying these franked documents to people who contribute little or nothing to the support of the Government in any way. Is this fair? Each Patent Office Report will have cost the Treasury four or five dollars by the time it reaches its destination, and will not be valued by the receiver at twenty-five cents. Why should this business go on? Why not "reform it altogether?" Let Congress print what ever documents are needed for its own information, and leave the People to choose and buy for themselves! I have spent four days and five nights in close contact with the sharp edges of Mr. Bernhisel's "Pub. Doc."—have done my very utmost to make them present a smooth, or at least endurable surface; and I am sure there is no slumber to be extracted therefrom unless by reading them—a desperate resort which no rational person would recommend. For all practical purposes, they might as well—now that the Printer has been paid for them—be where I heartily wish they were—in the bottom of the sea.

## XVIII.

### South Pass to Bridger.

BIG SANDY, Oregon, July 6, 1859.

I wrote last from the Mail Company's station-tent in "Quaking Asp Canon," at the East end of the South Pass, three miles off the direct and well-beaten road from the Missouri to Salt Lake, and so to California, which was formerly the road to Oregon as well. Col. Lander, at the head of a U. S. exploring and pioneer party, has just marked and nearly opened a new road through the Canon aforesaid, which makes a Northern cut-off, and strikes the old Oregon trail some fourteen miles south of Fort Hall, saving sixty miles on the journey to Oregon, and striking through to California on a northerly route, which I think pushes through to the north of Honey Lake, and thence over the Sierra down one of the forks of the Yuta. I cannot, of course, say that this is better than the old route, but it can hardly be more destitute of grass, while the naked fact that it divides the travel affords cheering hope of a mitigation of the sufferings and hardships of the long journey. I missed seeing Col. Lander to my regret; but I am sure he is doing a good work, for which thousands will have reason to bless him. At all events, a great majority of the California, with all the Oregon emigration, is turning off on the new route, and I pray that they may find on it food for their weary, famished cattle, and a safe journey to their chosen homes.

Though the elevation of the Pass is nearly 8,000 feet above the ocean level, I never endured heat exceeding that of yesterday in and about the station-tent. The sun rose clear, as it almost always does here in Summer, soon dispelling the chill which attends every night in this region, and by 9 o'clock the heat was most intense. But the afternoon brought clouds, and a petty rain-squall, and the following night was cold enough to still any mosquitoes but those of the Rocky Mountains. I suspect these would sting and bite even with the mercury at zero.

Toward evening, I climbed the hill on the east of the Canon, and obtained from its summit a wide prospect, but how desolate! These hills are of volcanic formation, a kind of coarse slate, the strata upheaved almost perpendicularly, the surface shattered and shingly, with veins of hard Quartz running across them.—There is scarcely a bushel of soil to each square rod, and of course no grass, and the little vegetation of any kind. To the north, say ten or twenty miles away, is a snow-streaked range of the Roey Mountains; to the south, some miles across the Sweetwater, are lower and less barren hills, with some snow-banks and some wood—Quaking Asp and Yellow Pine—on their northern slopes. The Sweetwater heads among the mountains to the north-west. There is a little well-grassed grass on its immediate banks and on those tributaries—on the high rolling land which fills all beside of the wide space between the mountains north and those south, there is not a mule feed to each acre. Some Greasewood at intervals, the eternal Sagebrush, and a few weeds, with the Quaking Asp and Yellow Pine aforesaid, and a thick tangle of Bitter Cottonwood (which is a bad caricature of our Swamp Alder) thatching portions of a few of the smaller streams, comprise the entire vegetation of this forlorn region.

We started at 7 this morning, came down to the old Salt Lake, Oregon, and California trail at the Sweetwater, crossed and left that creek finally, and traversed a slightly rolling country for seven miles to the "Twin Buttes," two low, clay-

topped mounds which mark the point from which the water runs easterly to the Gulf of Mexico and westerly to the Pacific. If any one has pictured to himself the South Pass as running through some narrow, winding, difficult, rocky mountain gorge, he is grievously mistaken. The road through the South Pass is the best part of the route from Atebison to California; the clay has here been almost wholly washed away and carried off, so that the road passes over a coarse, heavy gravelly sand, usually as compact and smooth as the best illustrations of the genius of MacAdam. I never before traversed forty-five miles of purely natural road so faultless as that through the South Pass which I have traveled to-day. But this tract should be good for roads, as it seems good for nothing else. The natural obstacles to constructing a railroad through this region are not comparable to those overcome in the construction of the Camden and Amboy.

Passing the Twin Buttes—the distance between the mountains on the north and the hills on the south being not less than thirty miles, and thenceforth westward rapidly widening—we run down side of a dry, shallow water-course some five miles to a wet, springy marsh or morass of fifteen or twenty acres, covered with poor coarse grass, in which are found the so-called "Pacific Springs." The water is clear and cold but bad. Perhaps the number of dead cattle, of which the skeletons dot the marsh, made it so distasteful to me. At all events, I could not drink it. This bog is long and narrow; and from its western end issues a petty brook which takes its way southwesterly to the Sandy, Green River, the Colorado and the Gulf of California. Henceforth, toward the south and west, no hills are visible—nothing but a sandy, barren plain, mainly covered with the miserable Sagebrush.

Twelve miles further on, we crossed Dry Sandy—not quite dry at this point, but its thirsty sands would surely drink the last of it a mile or so further south. Five miles beyond this, the old well-beaten Oregon trail strikes off to the northwest while our road bends to the south-west. We are out of the South Pass, which many have traversed unconsciously and gone on wondering and inquiring when they should reach it. Seven miles further brought us to Little Sandy, and eight more to Big Sandy, whereon is the station at which, at 4 p. m., we (by order), stopped for the night. All these creeks appear to rise in the high mountains many miles north of us and to run off with constantly diminishing volume together to join the Colorado at the south. Neither has a tree on its banks that I have seen—only a few low willow bushes at long intervals—though I hear that some Cottonwood is found on this creek ten miles above. Each has a "bottom" or interval of perhaps four rods in average width in which a little grass is found, but next to none on the high sandy plains that separate them. Drouth and sterility reign here without a rival.

### FORT BRIDGER, Utah, July 8, 1859.

We crossed Big Sandy twice before quitting it—once just at the station where the above was written, and again eighteen miles further on. Twelve miles more brought us to Green River—a stream here perhaps as large as the Mohawk at Schoenectady or the Hudson at Waterford. It winds under a rapid, muddy current through a deep, narrow valley, much of it sandy and barren, but the residue producing some grass with a few large Cottonwoods at intervals, and some worthless bushes. There are three rope ferries within a short distance, and two or three trading-posts, somewhat frequented by Indians of the Snake tribe. Eighteen miles more of perfect desolation brought us to the next Mail Company's station on Black's Fork, at the junction of Ham's Fork, two large mill-streams that rise in the mountains south and west of this point, and run together into Green River. They have scarcely any timber on their banks, but a sufficiency of bushes—Bitter Cottonwood, Willow, Choke Cherry, and some others new to me—with more grass than I have found this side of the South Pass. On these streams live several old mountaineers, who have large herds of cattle which they are rapidly increasing by a lucrative traffic with the emigrants, who are compelled to exchange their tired, quant oxen and steers for fresh ones on almost any terms. R. D., whose tent we passed last evening, is said to have six or eight hundred head, and, knowing the country perfectly, finds no difficulty in keeping them through Summer and Winter by frequently shifting them from place to place over a circuit of thirty or forty miles. J. B., who has been here some twenty odd years, began with little or nothing, and has quietly accumulated some fifty horses, three or four hundred head of neat cattle, three squaws, and any number of half-breed children. He is said to be worth seventy-five thousand dollars, though he has not even a garden, has probably not tasted an apple or a peach these ten years, and lives in a tent which would be dear at fifty dollars. I instance this gentleman's way of life not by any means to commend it, but to illustrate the habits of a class. White men with two or three squaws each are quite common throughout this region, and young and relatively comely Indian girls are bought from their fathers by white men as regularly and openly as Circassians at Constantino-

ple. The usual range of prices is from \$40 to \$80—about that of Indian horses. I hear it stated that though all other trade may be dull, that in young squaws is always brisk on Green River and the North Platte. That women so purchased should be discarded or traded off, as satiety or avarice may suggest, and that they should desert or deceive their purchasers on the slightest temptation, can surprise no one. I met an Irishman on Big Sandy whose squaw had recently gone off with an Indian admirer, leaving him two clever, bright, half-breed children of seven and five years. I trust that plank in the Republican National Platform which affirms the right and duty of Congressional Prohibition not only of Slavery in the Territories but of Polygamy also is destined to be speedily embodied in a law.

We passed yesterday the two places at which a body of Mormons late in 1857 surprised and burned the supply trains following in the rear of the federal troops sent against them. The wagons were burned in corral, and the places where each stood is still distinctly marked on the ground. In view of all the antecedent facts, it seems incredible that the commanding officer who allowed his supply trains to follow thus in his rear, utterly unguarded and unwatched, should not have been brought before a court-martial.

We have been passing for the last two days scores of good log or ox-chains—in one instance a hundred feet together—which having been thrown away by California emigrants to lighten the loads of their famished, failing cattle, have been in the road for months, if not years, passed and noted by thousands, but by none thought worth picking up. One would suppose that the traders, the herdsmen, the Indians or some other of the residents of this region, would deem these chains worth having, but they do not. I had already become accustomed to the sight of wagon-tire, wagon-boxes, &c., rejected and spurned in this way, but good, new chains thus begging for owners I have only noted this side of the South Pass. They are said to be still more abundant further on.

This morning, I was agreeably surprised by a greeting from three acquaintances I made in Denver, who invited me to share their outfit and journey to California, who left Denver the morning before I did, and beside whom I camped my first night on the road to Laramie. They are just through the Cherokee trail, entering the mountains at Cache-la-Poudre and crossing Green River by a ferry some thirty miles below the point at which I did. They were detained one day making a raft on which to ferry their wagon over the North Platte, and found some rough places in the mountains; at one of which they were obliged to unbite their horses and let their wagon down a steeply by ropes. They found the water of Bitter Creek—along which lies their road for a hundred miles or so—bitter indeed; and in some places grass was deficient; but their horses look nearly as well as when they left Denver. Their route has of course been some 250 miles shorter than mine, and they will reach Salt Lake scarcely a day behind me. I wish I had been able to accompany them on their rugged and little-traveled route.

On the other side of the Pass, we had mainly clear, hot days; on this side, they are cloudy and cool. We had a little shower of rain with abundance of wind night before last, another shower last night, and more rain is now threatened.—Yet all old residents assure me that rain in Summer is very rare throughout this region.

We stop to night at a point only 100 miles from Salt Lake, with two rugged mountains to cross, so that we are not to reach that stopping-place till Monday.

HORACE GREELEY.

### Chaffing under the Collar.

A gentleman who has tried the plan successfully for five years, communicates the annexed method for preventing horses from chafing under the collar. He says he gets a piece of leather and has what he calls a false collar made, which is simply a piece of leather cut in such a shape as to lie singly, between the shoulders of the horse and the collar. This fends off the friction, and the collar slips and moves on the leather, and not on the shoulders of the horse. Chaffing is caused by friction, hence, you see the thing is entirely plausible. Some persons put pads or sheepskins under the collar; these, they say do as much hurt as good for they augment the heat. A single piece of leather, like that composing the outside of a collar without lining or stuffing, he assures us, is better than anything else.—*Boston Journal.*

The barber who dressed the head of a barrel, has been engaged to fix up the locks of a canal.

Another argument in favor of wearing hoops has just been given at Salisbury Point, where a vicious cow attacked a young lady, and would have killed her, had not her hoops kept off the creature's horns. The cow rolled her over like a big barrel.

A "colored lady" attired in the height of fashion, sailed into a store and electrified the clerk, by inquiring if he had one of "them hoop skirts with a digestible bustle?"

### Save the Man with the Red Hair.

It requires great coolness and experience to steer a canoe down these rapids, (the Saut St. Marie,) and a short time before our arrival (writes a correspondent) two Americans had ventured to descend them without boatmen, and were, consequently, upset. As the story was reported to us, one of them owed his salvation to a singular coincidence. As the accident took place immediately opposite the town, many of the inhabitants were attracted to the bank of the river to watch the struggles of the unfortunate men, thinking any attempt at a rescue would be helpless. Suddenly, however, a person appeared running toward the group, frantic with excitement. "Save the man with the red hair!" he vehemently shouted; and the exertions which were made in consequence of his earnest appeals proved successful, and the red-haired individual, in an exhausted condition, was safely landed. "He owes me eighteen dollars," said his rescuer, drawing a long breath, and looking approvingly on his assistants. The red-haired man's friend had not a creditor at the Saut, and, in default of a competing claim, was allowed to pay the debt to nature. "And I'll tell you what it is, stranger," said the narrator of the foregoing incident, "completely drawing a moral therefrom, 'a man 'll never know how necessary he is to society if he don't make his life valuable to his friends as well as to himself.'"

### The Distance of the Sun Increasing.

A German publication has given the calculation to prove that the distance between the earth and the sun is annually increasing, and attributes to this fact the increasing humidity of our summers, and the loss of fertility in the soil of the formerly most favored regions of the earth. The vegetable and animal remains found even within the recent strata of the Arctic circle, show a degree of heat formerly prevailed there which equalled that of equatorial regions of the present time, and although many ingenious theories have been started to account for this desolation of a once sunny region, none seems so rational as the very obvious one of a gradual withdrawal of the great source of light and heat. The Egyptians, Chinese and other nations have traditions that at a very early period of their history the apparent diameter of the sun was double what it now is, and according to the tables of the German savant, in the course of six thousand years more the disc of that luminary will have diminished so that we shall receive but one eighth part of the solar influence which we at present enjoy, the whole earth being covered with eternal ice. It is now admitted by the most orthodox school of science that the earth and other planets were thrown off from the sun, so that our globe has confessedly traveled one hundred millions of miles from its birth place, and no absurdity exists in the supposition that it has not yet ceased receding, though at a constantly diminished rate, which may or may not reach the 0 point before it arrives at such a distance as to be uninhabitable, when following the analogy of all other known perturbations and eccentricities among the different bodies of the universe, it will undoubtedly retrace its steps to a point much nearer than any it has occupied during the historic period, and so move back and forth, like a mighty pendulum forever, measuring off perhaps thousands of ages at each beat. Or perchance, having run its course, it will fall back into the sun—as a man, who springs from dust, returns to dust again—to be again evolved in the form of nebulous matter, and again condensed into a habitable globe.—*Newburyport Herald.*

### How to Stop Blood.

Housekeepers, mechanics and others, in handling knives, tools or any sharp instrument, very frequently receive severe cuts, from which blood flows profusely and often times endangers life itself.—Blood may be made to cease to flow as follows: Take the fine dust of tea, and bind it close to the wound; at all times accessible, and easily to be obtained. After the blood has ceased to flow, laudanum may be advantageously applied to the wound. Due regard to these instructions will save agitation of the mind, and running for the surgeon, who would, probably, make no better prescription if he was present.

"What are you staring at, sir, may I ask?"—said an imperial mustached blood to a Hoosier, on a Mississippi steamboat, who had been watching him as a cat watches a mouse, for some fifteen minutes.

"I thought so," exclaimed the Hoosier, the moment the other spoke; "I said you'd got a mouth, and I was only waiting to beartin about it, to ask you to liquor. Stranger, what will you drink? or had you rather fight? I don't care which myself."

"Father," said a cobbler's lad, as he was pegging away at an old shoe, "they say that trout bite good now." "Well, well," replied the old gentleman, "you stick to your work, and they soon 'll bite you."

"Can you tell me, Bill how it is that a rooster always keep his feathers sleek and smooth?" "No," said Bill. "Well, he always carries his comb with him."